

## **Message from His Eminence Archbishop Makarios on International Greek Language Day**



Today when we commemorate our national poet Dionysios Solomos, all Hellenism proudly celebrates, for the fourth year, International Greek Language Day.

And no one is excluded from this celebration. On the contrary, everyone participates – and there are many – who regardless of their origin, recognise the fundamental role that Greek language has played in the consolidation of European as well as world culture.

And, naturally, all Christians participate wholeheartedly, considering that the Greek language was the vehicle that spread the Holy Gospel and Christ's Truth throughout the universe.

Our local Greek community in Australia has an additional reason for celebration today and this is because, from the very beginning, it embraced and supported the endeavour for the establishment of International Greek Language Day. Moreover, personally, I have no doubt that our compatriots here in the Antipodes constitute the most dynamic part of Greeks abroad, and keep alive their relationship with the motherland, honouring the customs and mores, the traditions, the Orthodox faith and, of course, the language of our ancestors.

For our Holy Archdiocese, it is a primary duty and sacred obligation to work for the

conservation and strengthening of these strong bonds.

With the deep conviction that the Greek language constitutes a formative element of our identity, we have dedicated ourselves to the goal of defending and reviving it; a goal that is firmly and steadily served by our educational institutions through the capable teaching staff as well as by our parishes, through the care and concern of our good priests and the members of the church committees.

Furthermore, it is served by occasional circumstances that warrant it, such as when our local Church led the fight to save the Greek Studies Program at La Trobe University in Melbourne.

Therefore, honouring its role and responsibility towards the Greek community, the Holy Archdiocese will continue to be present daily in all the small and large battles, holding high the flag of the sacred struggle for the perpetuation of the Greek language in Australia.

But we need the help of all our compatriots; to make this struggle a personal and family matter, in every household, in every neighbourhood, and in every corner on this fifth continent where the heart of Hellenism beats.

My personal request, on this day, is for all of us to follow the exhortation of our poet, Kostis Palamas: "Hold high the banners for our mother tongue"!